



FIRST THINGS FIRST

The right system for bright futures

February 4, 2009

Madame Chair and Members of the Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board,

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council is requesting to present the revised Strategy #6 from the FY09-FY12 Funding Plan at the February 24, 2009 Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board meeting in Tucson. The Program Committee had returned this strategy to the Regional Council for further development and we are pleased to report that the Regional Council is ready to present this re-developed strategy for your approval:

Strategy Six: *Expand access to early childhood courses through an educational fund for high school graduates, GED holders and individuals who are not already working in the field of Early Education and Care but seek to attain basic higher education to enter the child care workforce skilled and prepared.*

An earlier written version of the strategy, which indicated the Council's interest in focusing on teen parents, was revised for a broader target population of high school graduates, GED holders and any individual interested in the field of early childhood education. It is a way to create a well-prepared child care workforce for the region, because the Santa Cruz area lacks potential employees with even minimum requirements to work in a child care setting.

The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council met on January 7, 2009 to discuss further development of this strategy. The discussion centered on shifting the target population and re-examining both their intention for this strategy and how it could be implemented in Santa Cruz communities. The Chair and the Regional Coordinator requested input in revising the strategy from Regional Council members with knowledge and expertise in professional development. Vice Chair Vellom and members Rosas and Mendez met with the Coordinator and provided content input for the newly revised strategy. As directed by the Regional Council, the Coordinator then consulted with Chair Neuman and Vice Chair Vellom for final review. The Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council is respectfully requesting that the State Board now consider final approval of Strategy #6 in the already approved Funding Plan.

The funding for this strategy (\$42,000) has not been modified from the original Funding Plan. The intent remains the same, with the slight alteration in proposed target population as described above. The aim of the strategy is to assist in preparing potential providers/educators with foundational learning in child development so they can enter the workforce with the competencies needed to educate young children. Students would then become workers in our Pre-Ks, child care centers and family child care homes, who then promote high quality education and go on to obtain CDAs and degrees with T.E.A.C.H. scholarships as they serve in various settings—hopefully some that are part of *Quality First!*

Thank you for your consideration,

Maria L. Neuman, Chair

Santa Cruz Regional Partnership Council

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FIRST THINGS FIRST
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